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THE
VILLAGE FESTIVAL

A POEM
BY
SCRIBOLUS

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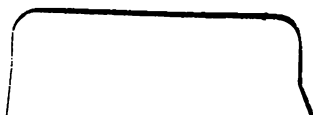


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THE

VILLAGE FESTIVAL:

A Descriptive Poem.

BY

SCRIBOLUS.



1862.

280. c. 152.

H. BROWN, PRINTER, MICHAEL'S PLACE, BROMPTON.



If nothing venture nothing can we win,
He who would prosper must at once begin :
The aged seaman dreads the wreck and shoal,
But youth looks only on the distant goal.

Let greater orators their powers raise,
And deem my language childish and uncouth :
My words are simple—humble as my lays ;
No vain or idle flattery, but truth.

Peruse this work: undoubtedly you'll find
The evidences of a youthful mind ;
But still, dear critic, when you're seeking ill,
Remember, "steep's the literary hill ;"
For you at top, who've many works to show,
Are apt to laugh at those who'd rise below.

THE
VILLAGE FESTIVAL.



INTRODUCTION.



Now Jove's bright orb, all nature to adorn,
Unfolds the splendours of another morn ;
Spans Heaven's high arch with an ethereal light,
And pales the moon till the return of night.

O globe of light ! Thou traveller from far,
Thou unknown blazon, and imperial star :
Thou floating palace in an azure sea,
A grand impenetrable mystery !

Thou haughty sphere, o'erlooking ev'ry clime,
 Thy Maker's willing instrument of time :
 Come with thy presence—for 'tis ever sure
 To bless the daily labour of the poor.

Couldst thou declare the wonders of thy frame,
 Thy origin, thy purpose, and thine aim ;
 Then would the knowledge hidden in thy ball
 Solve us, the mightiest mystery of all.

Here sceptic gaze, for daily doth he rise,
 To light the space of undiscover'd skies :
 To give to all the blessings of the light,
 To chase the shadows that enshroud the night.

With wonder look, with admiration see
 This vast, profound, unfathomed mystery ;
 See God's own finger, as it hangs in space,
 For none but His could fix it in its place.

Lo ! see it rise ! an avalanche of light,
 Hurls lurking shadows to attend the night ;
 And shining Sol, Jove's wisdom to obey,
 Shapes out his journey, and decrees it—Day.

Then hail, bright orb ! come, welcome, to the plain,
 Welcom'd alike by courtezan and swain :
 Cheered by thy presence we commence our toil,
 Join in the chase, or labour in the soil.

Can those who dwell amidst the stench of towns,
 'Midst Babel's modern hieroglyph of sounds :
 Can those who breathe their vitiated air
 Seek contemplation in its glories there ?

Can those who, fix'd 'twixt heaven and the earth,
 In garrets high, philosophise thy worth :
 Can they thy beauties and thy wonders see,
 When veil'd by mist as powerful as thee ?

Towns have their charms, but villages be mine,
 Where ideas brighten, and conceptions shine ;
 Where pleasures cheer us by their latent fire,
 And give to fancy all the mind's desire.

Where man may dwell, and in retirement flee
 The cursed shackles of society ;
 Where, free from care, unheeded and unknown,
 He with content may ruralise at home.

Content ? O yes, that oft-miscalled name,
 That panacea for a dull mind's pain :
 A soothing cordial, flatulent and mild,
 To please a fool, or satisfy a child.

Who is content ? Our oracles propound
 That he who has it rarely can be found.
 And well 'tis so : if never more we scan
 That drudging drone,—the unambitious man.

Had some who, reared in hovel or in cot,
 Been self-contented with their humble lot,
 Still would the world to knowledge have been blind,
 Through dormant talents, hidden in the mind.

A well cloaked word, but aspiration's bane,
 A wily phantom in an author's brain :
 A word deceptive as a love-drawn sigh—
 An airy fabric that may please the eye.

Then scout the by-word, and aspiring shine :
 Let sweet ambition, with its hopes, be thine ;
 Then, when the treasure its excitements lend,
 Content the means—and struggle to the end.

Ne'er seek retirement, nor with modest eyes,
 Be dazzled by the brightness of the prize ;
 But patient live, and, persevering, aim
 To win the honours only culled by fame.

Then ne'er your simple ignorance deride,
Nor with indifference your talents hide ;
For when they're hidden in a narrow space,
They're oft reflected on another's face.

All have their share, to cherish or abuse,
Honours to grasp at, chances to refuse :
Stars, often hidden when the moon shines clear,
Are bright as meteors when none other's near.

Best to be little, aiming to be great,
Than to be greatest in an humble state :
One talent's best, with diligence combin'd,
Than fifty, lagging in an idle mind.

Some talents have to conquer in debate,
While others guide the counsels of the state ;
Others, prolific, turn them to abuse,
And sacrifice them to a sordid use.

Take even those who, with observant eye,
 Witness the curses of society ;
 Yet use their knowledge with a selfish aim,
 And reap their riches from their readers' shame.

Some may descant on Providence and fate,
 Others depict the fortunes of the great ;
 But these grand subjects will not do for me—
 Mine are the pleasures of rusticity.

For they've attractions ne'er to be despis'd,
 Charms to be cherished, ever to be priz'd :
 Treasures to doat on, pleasures that will last,
 And leave us happy when the cause is past.

Be mine the fortune (I despise it not)
 To paint the rustic and his simple lot :
 To teach the ignorant, whoe'er they be,
 That happiness exists in poverty.

No muse I ask to weave me, in a dream,
The web of an imaginative theme :
No lyre invoke, to aid me with its spell,
While I depict a VILLAGE FESTIVAL.



THE MORNING.

Hark ! while the cock, with shrill awak'ning horn,
Proclaims the advent of another morn,
When village hinds, who lazily give ear,
Obey the summons of proud chanticleer.

Rous'd by his call, his envious rival plies
Responsive echoes to the vaulted skies :
While matron hens, that listen to the strain,
Forsake their roosts, and cackle in his train.

Abroad the birds sing blithely to the air ;
The wolf and fox hie homeward to their lair ;
And bats and bitterns, with the morn's first peep,
Forget their vigils in oblivious sleep.

The hawthorn wafts its fragrance on the breeze,
The sparkling dew drops glisten on the trees ;
And incense, sweeter than the flow'rs of May,
Bespeaks the presence of the new-mown hay.

The peaceful hamlets dot the verdant plain,
And feather'd songsters warble in each lane ;
While lowing oxen seek the welcome shade,
And graze contented in the woodland glade.

Yon purling brook, meandering at will,
Sipt from the verdure of some grassy hill,
Murm'ring through copse, bounds rippling to the view,
The sunbeams mocking with its crystal hue.

The booming gun disturbs the timid hare ;
Unnumber'd insects teem the busy air ;
The wily hawk comes swooping on his prey,
And owls, affrighted, shun returning day.

The golden rays tint yonder ancient tow'r ;
 The bee sips nectar from each op'ning flow'r.
 The wand'ring gipsies on the banks recline,
 And snatch sweet herbs to give the passing kine.

The pretty primrose, ~~in~~ the shady grove,
 Awakens thoughts of our Creator's love ;
 And distant bells, that in yon hamlets chime,
 Speak volumes to us on departing time.

The modest daisy, peering from its bed,
 Sips the sweet moisture that surrounds its head ;
 And blushing violets, shrinking from our gaze,
 On scented zephyrs adoration raise.

Ye forward mortals, from your idols turn,
 And one short lesson from this flower learn ;
 Apply it often : 'tis of use to know,
 The rarest flowers in retirement grow.

The sunny morn with warmer climates vie :
 No threat'ning clouds hang lowering in the sky.
 Each scene around awakens ev'ry sense,
 And all proclaims the Great Omnipotence.

Each blade of grass which Providence design'd
 Attests the greatness of its Maker's mind :
 Reveals the power and the wise intent
 Of God—the Author of the firmament.

Even the linnet strains his little throat,
 And carols holy music in each note ;
 And e'en the lark, that flutters in the sky,
 By instinct praises the Divinity.

Ye wanton sportsmen, why exert your skill,
 The harmless little innocents to kill ?
 Have you ne'er learnt, as cheerfully they sing,
 The wondrous mechanism of each wing.

The God who made it fashion'd it aright,
 Dispos'd each pinion to assist in flight ;
 Form'd each small muscle with Almighty sense,
 And gave it swiftness for its sole defence.

Does not the eye e'en evidence His mind,
 That so imagined it to suit each kind :
 That so adapted with a mighty grace
 A noble instinct in a reason's place.

Man may exult, in an unthinking hour,
 His boasted and illimitable pow'r ;
 But all his science and superior skill
 Cannot create the sparrow he can kill.

Behold its nest, the wisdom of its form :
 How well dispos'd to keep its inmate warm ;
 Then will you think, the longer that you scan,
 How small, how insignificant is man.

Then, sportsman, spare them : e'er since Adam fell,
 Dame Nature's scale has equalized well.
 So let them live, to carol to the air,
 The plains to 'liven, and the woods to share.

Then rouse your thoughts—your better nature wake ;
 Form resolutions never more to break.
 Study the songsters, and their wonders see,
 And tune your minds to rural harmony.

Come to the meadows, there's attraction here,
 Where echoes fall melodious on the ear ;
 Where charms, unrivall'd and unequall'd, quell
 The wicked passions that in cities dwell.

Now you who, bar'd from mountains and from plains,
 Are doom'd to labour, with its thousand pains :
 Could you, in meditative fancy, see
 One particle of the reality ;—

And you, who've wealth and luxury in store,
 Could you but in imagination soar :—
 Could you but see it in a sense less vague,
 You'd shun the city as you would the plague.

But ye who dwell secluded in a cot,
 Ah ! thrice, thrice happy is your envied lot :
 Securely hidden from the world and strife,
 Yours is the pleasure of a happy life.

Then come, nor slumber in the early dawn,
 And learn of nature on a summer's morn :
 'Twill teach you lessons, as you'll surely find,
 That soothe the passions, and content the mind.

These are the pleasures, fairer than you know,
 That drive the shadows from the troubled brow :
 These are the treasures that endearing try,
 By sound attractions, to amuse the eye.

All, all around is peaceful and serene ;
Harmonious love reigns happily supreme ;
Each tree, each flow'r, partake their Maker's care.
And rev'ling fancy glows divinely there.

The playful lambkins, tended by the hind,
Bear plaintively their bleating to the wind ;
The faithful dog comes running o'er the lea
While careful shepherds whistle merrily.

Sweet is the ditty of the rustic clown,
The low hush'd tumult of the busy town ;
The distant whistle winding o'er the moor ;
The soft sad murmur of the ocean's roar ;

The shady grove of sycamore and yew ;
The leafy hedges, trembling with the dew ;
The grassy verdure, carpeting each mead ;—
All, all betokens happiness indeed.

The ruin'd seat, and monumental stone ;
 The old gnarl'd oak, which centuries have known ;
 The clinging ivy, and the cawing rook,
 Are simple monitors of Nature's book.

The browsing cattle, and the busy bee ;
 The chatting milkmaid, happy as can be :
 Yea, e'en the murmur of the rustling leaves
 Afford the food that contemplators please.

Such scenes as these greet our admiring eyes,
 And give a foretaste of blest paradise ;
 Gives heartfelt gladness, best enchantments lend,
 And yields those pleasures that to heaven tend.

Such is the spot which poetasters choose
 'To meditate on, and indulge the muse.
 'Midst such a scene my wayward fancies dwell,
 Participating in a festival.

GOING TO THE FAIR.

Long ere the rising of the glorious sun,
The lowly hind his labour has begun ;
Then, gladly lighten'd of his morning's care,
Returns, and takes his helpmate to the fair.

His little children clamber on the chair,
And beg a kiss, and penny for the fair ;
While teasing parents, chidingly severe,
Recount the misdemeanors of the year.

Their varied wants the little ones proclaim,
And with sad coaxing all their wishes gain ;
Then with a kiss, provoked by their charms,
Run off, rejoicing, to their mother's arms.

.

(Now children's perseverance never tires
Till they obtain their wishes and desires.
Well mothers know that disappointed glee
Breeds vexitious troubles in a family.)

And well these know that *worrying* obtains
Their wants, their wishes, and their utmost aims ;
So, with the wisdom of the cunning fox,
They *bother* mother for their money box.

Each penny given for some errand run,
Each trifle given for each good deed done,
Consid'rate mother savingly's put by,
To stint the palate, and amuse the eye.

High out of reach, though wisely kept in sight,
She's giv'n the box each hard-acquired mite :
Has sav'd each coin, each trifle put away,
To spend and squander in a single day.

With mantling blushes (modesty's best charm),
 She takes each kiss, nor magnifies the harm ;
 Whispers love's chatter in his willing ear,
 And those soft nothings that he loves to hear.

Her wond'ring parents, unperceived, advance,
 And mark the kissing with an anxious glance ;
 Then sternly chiding the unmaiden act,
 They point to blushes that attest the fact.

(Why should they blush, when trespassers they see ?
 If kissing's crime, then blushes there should be ;
 Yet, if a crime, they like it well begun,
 And only blush when all the kissing's done.)

The youthful damsel wanders on before,
 With just the tact her mother played of yore ;
 While fondling dame, to list'ning arts inclin'd,
 Gives half an ear to whisperings behind.

The love-lorn youth, to all her failings blind,
 Thinks her perfection of sweet womankind;
 Vows she's the best that ever graced the land,
 And asks the old man for his daughter's hand.

The aged sire, with trembling accents, speak,
 While tears unbidden course his furrow'd cheek :
 " I fondly hoped, contented she would be
 ' To live a comfort to my wife and me.

' All, all alike the gordian knot would tie—
 ' Get wed, repent, and pray to heav'n to die ;
 ' Yet linger on,—a matrimonial thorn,—
 ' To curse the pleasures of the wedding morn.

' Yet, when, at last, one's eased of her mate,
 ' Then she deplores it, and laments her fate ;—
 ' Wears the sad trappings, and the garb of woe,
 ' To mimic sorrow for a month or two ;

‘ Sheds a few tears, and often shakes her head ;
 ‘ And then repeats the sentence he last said ;
 ‘ Vows that, as husband, better could not be,
 ‘ And decks delusion with reality.

‘ Those tears are feigned,—her fickle heart is glad,—
 ‘ She smiles to think she’s rid of one so bad ;
 ‘ Yet takes no lesson from her former pain,
 ‘ But tempts the dang’rous lottery again.

‘ ’Tis e’er my maxim, in a case like this,
 ‘ To those who ponder on connubial bliss :
 ‘ ‘ Ne’er seek the *altar*, rushing to be wed,
 ‘ When best to wear one, and be gibbeted.’

‘ But still, ’tis idle, as she’s made her mind :
 ‘ To sway a woman is to sway the wind ;
 ‘ And he whose pow’r can alter her decree,
 ‘ Can cheat a knaving lawyer of his fee.

‘ Then take my daughter : I am not to blame,
 ‘ If she’s no angel when you’ve chang’d her name,
 ‘ This dow’r I’ll give you :—*she can tend the sty* ;
 ‘ *Make Norfolk dumplings, or a Yorkshire pie.*

‘ Here, take her kindly : take her to your heart,
 ‘ As parsons tell ye, never more to part.
 ‘ Heaven’s choicest blessings with our darling take,
 ‘ And treat her gently, for an old man’s sake.”

Thus, pleas’d and happy, to the fair they go,
 Nor think of trouble they have yet to know ;
 Date their imagin’d happiness from hence,
 And rest quite happy in their ignorance.

Yon smiling dame, like some old patriarch, bears
 The noble honours due to aged years ;
 And like an oak, a relic of the past,
 That lies defenceless to the wintry blast.

Poor dear old soul ! whom sorrow cannot vex ;
Whose life has been an honour to her sex ;
Though pamp'ring goodness leaves her nought to crave,
Slowly, but surely, hastens to the grave.

Like some great conqueror, when the strife is o'er ;
Who shows the struggle in each dreadful scar ;
So in her face we see a lifetime's care,
And in the wrinkles mark its traces there.

Religion guides her in each daily deed,
And prompts the duties that to heaven lead ;
Expels the thought that theory will do ;
So learns the lesson, and practises too.

Yet not so pious as to think it wrong —
A deadly error, to peruse a song ;
Nor does she echo all that parsons say,
Who damn the sinner that attends a play.

No bigot she, all others to despise,
 Who boast a faith her common sense denies ;
 Nor does she think to her alone ~~is~~ giv'n,
 And only her, the typic keys of heav'n.

Lives with the present, clings unto the past,
 And hopes heav'n's portion to obtain at last :
 With sweet contentments, and remote from fears,
 Now glides serenely through declining years.

Old age has crown'd her hoary locks, which show
 The deepen'd wrinkles gather'd in her brow ;
 And years of trouble, with their griefs and pain,
 Have now transformed her to the babe again.

Though, unregretted, life is ebbing fast,
 She loves the pleasures that enhanc'd the past ;
 So, with the young, she banishes each care,
 And goes to grace the splendours of the fair.

In faded silk, which, years ago, she scorn'd,
 And well-frill'd cap, with finery adorn'd;
 In new-trimm'd bonnet does the granddame go,
 As fond as ever of an outward show.

Her duteous son, with kind protecting care,
 Escorts his aged mother to the fair;
 While his good wife has quite enough to do
 To chide the children,—and to kiss them too.

That stout hale farmer, on like pleasure bent,
 Returns with grace her kindly compliment;
 While granny's snuff box, and the village news,
 Is handed forth for his especial use.

The nag he rides his weighty master bears
 With selfsame speed he's used for many years;
 Which seldom equals (barring in a shower)
 The modest distance of three miles an hour.

Sagacious brute, knows he will reap no harm ;
For why ? in liquor master's sprain'd his arm ;
So dreads no whip, but lagging on the way ---
Is sure of pardon, as he's old and grey.

So poor old Ned's inclin'd to frequent halts,
And knows his master's failings and his faults ;
For, when in liquor, he's disposed to roam,
In opposition, Neddy takes him home.

Ne'er jib'd but once in all his useful life,
Then pleas'd the farmer, as he killed his wife ;
For one dark night, well frighten'd by a witch.
He left her roaring in a dirty ditch.

Now she is dead,—and as he strives to please,
He lives a life of indolence and ease ;
Knowing full well—presuming on the fact
That her misfortune was a welcome act.

So on he joys, oft stopping on the way,
 To snatch a morsel from the tempting hay ;
 While master strives, with rhetorical flow'rs,
 To show his learning and conversing pow'rs.

But all trudge on, contributing their share
 To banish sorrow, and to drive off care ;
 To court good humour with their gleeful chat,
 To laugh, be merry, and of course grow fat.

Yet, to my thinking, were this adage true,
 His morning's jesting would the farmer rue ;
 For, though he'd laugh, and corpulency gain,
 'Twould give a pleasure that would lead to pain.

Undoubtedly of aldermannic size ;
 An advocate for porkers and for pies ;
 A warm admirer of the pure delight
 That's breath'd in taverns on a winter's night.

To wit :—mine hostess, with her num'rous charms ;
 With freckled forehead and colossal arms :
 A lengthen'd handle to a plebian name,
 And huge supporters to her monstrous frame.

But still, 'tis best, o'er follies that we know,
 The mantle of oblivion to throw ;
 But this I'll mention, lest you think me rude :
 She'd not the least objection to be woo'd.

The little children with their grandma'am go
 To see the dancing and the puppet show ;
 Laugh, run, and chatter, happy as can be,
 In expectation, frolic merrily.

One chubby fellow clutches grandma's gown,
 And plays at *driving little pigs to town* ;
 While little Tommy, with uplifted hand,
 Admires the music of the distant band.

Like all the world, (whatever be their boast,)
They envy that within their reach the most ;
And, like their betters, when they view such scenes,
Admire the sequel, but decline the means.

Yes, envy reigns, pervading ev'ry air,
And's breath'd by all, in ev'ry atmosphere ;
Is shar'd alike by noble and by clown,
In hamlet, village, capital, and town.

Now near his dwelling stands the humble church,
Whose creed requires no learning or research ;
From whose lov'd faith no difficulties grow,
Beyond temptations that all Christians know.

Time-worn and ancient—hast'ning to decay,
With moss-grown belfry mouldering away ;
With still true dial that adorns the tow'r,
And warns the Christian of his dying hour.

A holy house, a perfect heav'n within ;
 A shelt'ring refuge from the world and sin ;
 Whose simple tablets offer praise to God,
 And point the road the villagers have trod.

No sculptur'd forms the worshippers distract,
 Or frescoes woo them with consummate tact ;
 No pealing organ, with convulsive throes,
 Disturbs the sweetness of the soul's repose.

No scarlet robes, or chasubles they bring,
 To deck the Pastor as a tragic king ;
 No abstruse forms, or similies obscure,
 Combine with riches to attract the poor ;

But all is thoughtful, earnest, and sedate,—
 The prim religion of an older date ;
 With sterner tenets that will save a soul,
 Without the fear of ceremony's shoal.

No mitred prelates, worshipping, adore
 The once despised poorest of the poor ;
 No varied grandeur for us to admire,
 For lo ! 'tis centred in the village squire.

No shaven priest, enrob'd in austere black,
 Shifts off the sins that's huddled on his back :
 No rogue dives in your pocket and his wit,
 To find a folly for his tongue to hit.

But here's a pastor, who, though cloth'd in brown,
 Acquires respect from lady and from clown ;
 Who takes the erring from the devil's rod,
 And leads them gently to a pard'ning God.

One in whose life no scandal you can see,
 With whom grand phrases never did agree :
 One who, though fortune may forgetting frown,
 Still feels contented when the wheel is down.

Bears all his troubles with a placid smile,
 And thus, consoling, ruminates awhile :—
 Best bear misfortunes at the present time,
 Than expiate them in a hotter clime.

Few are his patrons—many his good deeds—
 Simple his wishes—moderate his needs :
 The poor man's donor, and a good heart's fool—
 A plain admirer of the olden school.

In speech he's searching, and, in humble phrase,
 He gives a joke as slowly as he prays ;
 While his weigh'd words ne'er animated seem,
 Excepting when religion is the theme.

Oft is he seen, when daylight's on the wane,
 To pay a visit to a neighbour'ring lane ;
 To lift the latch of a sequester'd home,
 The habitation of a Priest of Rome.

Then o'er their ale the classics will they read,
 Or else discuss the merits of each creed :
 Unite in saving sinners from the devil,
 But at transubstantiation rebel.

Then to their peace, an ever sounding knell—
 They drag a purgat'ry 'twixt heav'n and hell :
 Think t'other's doctrine is a stumbling block,
 But stick to theirs like limpets to a rock.

Then, with excitement and the subject warm,
 They'd take by precept what they can't by storm :
 Explain, propound, and mystifying, seek
 To back their learned arguments with Greek.

Each quotes his fav'rite commentator's laws,
 To point the errors in the other's cause ;
 But each leaves off the same as he began,
 More firmly settled in his own great plan.

(What pity 'tis all cannot thus agree
To use discussion without enmity ;
But yet 'tis true, religion has espied
More words and wars than anything beside.)

But when at last the flagon has been drain'd,
When hours have flown with happiness unfeign'd ;
When morn's grey light comes peering at the chink,
The parting cup in harmony they drink.

When, arm in arm, they wander to the gate,
The last good-bye they ling'ringly await ;
Then, while pure friendship in their bosoms burn,
One heartfelt grasp they lovingly return.



THE INN.

Yon ivied inn, renown'd throughout the vale
For sparkling cider and for nut-brown ale,
With modest presence tempts the willing clown,
And welcomes trav'lers from the distant town.

With gabled roof, and wide convenient door,
Whence twice a week bread's given to the poor;
With lattic'd casements, now wide open thrown,
Round which the jasmine and the ivy's grown.

Sweet hostelry, chief magnet of the scene,
That stands commanding o'er the sloping green;
Seen by each group that's present on the ground,
It spreads its genial influence around.

From thence is seen the distant village spire,
 The curling smoke from yonder homestead fire :
 The little cot, just peering through the trees,
 Whose leaves are rustling with the fresh'ning breeze.

Here can we see the creaking signboard swing,
 Grac'd by the portrait of Britannia's King ;
 With grunting pigs, whose swinish wand'rings tell
 Their owner's presence at the festival.

Beneath the sign—best painted in the land,
 Plac'd next the pump, the troughs for cattle stand :
 By age decay'd, are now by moss o'ergrown,
 And have for company the old grindstone.

Now bells re-echo in each greenland bow'r,
 The flag is waving on the village tow'r ;
 While flow'rs and ribbons now proclaim to all,
 That 'tis the morning of the festival.

The children hurry from the old dame's school,
Forsake her lessons and the dreaded rule ;
And all, from baby to its grave grandsire,
Come decked and smiling in their best attire.

The chatt'ring carter brings his master's team,
To slake its thirst and welter in the stream ;
And little youngsters seek the shelter'd nook,
To spin the worm that writhes upon the hook.

But all seek pleasure, and in humour gay,
To various likings, spend their holiday ;
While cheerful music contributes its share
To keep the customs of the village fair.

By ev'ry road, from ev'ry village near,
From ev'ry hamlet, rustics hasten here,
And throng the lane that opens on the green,
The chosen meadow for the happy scene.

THE MUSICIANS.

There is a saying which we often hear,
That music's charms can sooth the savage ear ;
But here's a band to set the world agog,
To breed a *danseuse* from a bacon hog.

First there is one, whose solitary eye
Is e'er in search of a discovery ;
Whose fiddle knows, when tickled with a guinea,
More devil's notes than that of Paganini.

But such a sum our worthy never takes,
Except at weddings, christenings, or wakes ;
So when his audit'ry and gains are small,
He plays accordingly, — and suits them all.

Blest by the presence of his master mind,
 The crack'd old fifer, sadly short of wind,
 Leads up the tune,—commencing with a sigh,—
 And pipes his string-bound instrument and eye ;

But not with tears,—the ancient vet'rans nose,
 In size and colour, smacks of gin and cloves ;
 His blear'd dull eyes bespeak the sottish vice ;
 His careworn countenance, his love for dice.

What is the meaning of that ogling plot :
 That strict attention to the batter'd pot?
 Teetotallers, you say, they cannot be ;
 And, faith, you're right : they're for gin totally.

Now here's the dame, with her companions, come,
 Fond of her husband and a drop of rum ;
 A perfect pyramid of flesh and bone ;
 Her weight a trifle—only sixteen stone.

I once heard one—as timid as a calf—
 Bless me, and wish I'd got his better half ;
 But had he fifty,—all the sultan's got,—
 The dame would make three-quarters of the lot.

Singing's her task,—at least it ought to be ;
 But then 'tis not :—a difference, you see ;
 But, as to screeching ! 'tis a fact indeed, —
 Stick her in Wales, you'd hear her on the Tweed.

Charm'd by her voice, to harmony inclin'd,
 The bass joins in, the basest of the kind ;
 One who can't dig, and is ashamed to beg,
 So goes out singing, with a wooden leg.

A sailor 'tis ;—imaginative mind,
 Who goes a voyage with each puff of wind ;
 Who with his yarns would cram you like a rook,
 And tells lies fit to scribble in a book.

Who vows he takes it as a great offence
 To be continually pro-offer'd pence;
 Who swears to insult purposely 'tis done,
 Yet feels offended when they offer none.

But hark! the song, in mellifluous strain,
 Meanders like a gander in a lane;
 While octaves flow as from a dying duck,
 Or playful chicken, learning how to suck.

While all this time we've been compelled to wait,
 The fifer's wiped the moisture from his pate;
 The drunken dame has finished off her rum;
 The fiddler has struck up—the song's begun:—

THE SONG.

“ Oft at even I walk by the banks of yon river,
 ‘ And sit, sad and lone, 'neath the willow's dark shade;
 ‘ To gaze on the flower, and to think on the giver,
 ‘ That stole my young heart when a wee little maid.

‘ Oh, ’tis often I ponder, when weary, reclining,
 ‘ On the time when I lov’d and liv’d but for him ;
 ‘ When I bore ev’ry humour,—not even repining,—
 ‘ To be at last barter’d,—a transient whim.

‘ ’Twas beneath these dark trees, where we sorrow’d and parted,
 ‘ Where I gave the purse and the kerchief I hemm’d ;
 ‘ And ’twas through these same branches the bright sunshine
 ‘ And lit on the page where my love he contemn’d. [darted,

‘ Ah ! yes ; this is the spot, where I op’d his last letter,
 ‘ Where, swooning, I read that my love he disclaim’d ;
 ‘ Here he sent back my presents. Thus bursting each fetter,
 ‘ He cast off poor Mary—though *her* love remain’d.

‘ Where he sent back the ribbon that once deck’d his hat brim,
 ‘ The old crooked sixpence we once tried to part,
 ‘ And the well-knitted stockings I blushing gave him,
 ‘ All these he return’d, and it broke my poor heart.

‘ How I look’d o’er the meadows, and pray’d for his coming,
 ‘ And heard not his whistle, nor dog’s welcome bark ;
 ‘ How, like a true sweetheart, all my love for him sunning,
 ‘ I ventur’d to hope till the shadows grew dark.

“ How I clung to his promise, unchang’d and unshaken,
 ‘ And thought he was faithful to me and love’s law ;
 ‘ How at each smile I hop’d on, though cruelly forsaken,
 ‘ As drowning men clutch at a glittering straw.

‘ Oh ! how fondly and truly I worshipp’d and doated,
 ‘ Confiding my griefs in his false beating breast ;
 ‘ Yet he fled from my presence, no longer devoted,
 ‘ To boast of my love as a bacchanal jest.

‘ Yes, often lonely I feel, and the tears trickle down,
 ‘ When dwelling on hopes that were crush’d in their morn ;
 ‘ When, as musing, I ramble in the same russet gown
 ‘ That I wore when he left me to grieve I was born.

‘ Here they brought me the news that my mother was dying,
 ‘ When marriage bells told me my rival was wed ;
 And, ere choking my sorrow,—each tear drop denying,—
 ‘ They rang the last peal—the sad knell of the dead.

‘ So now I’m alone,—not one relation around me,—
 ‘ No kind-hearted friend in this grief-laden sphere ;
 ‘ No parent’s or husband’s true love to surround me ;
 ‘ No children to yield me a last parting tear.

‘ The old maids may still chide me, and think that I’m silly ;
 ‘ The young folks may laugh, and declare that I’m mad ;
 ‘ But they cannot have lov’d as I lov’d my dear Willie,
 ‘ Or surely they’d pity one humble and sad.

‘ Yes, I often sit me down, when the sun sinks to rest,
 ‘ When the blue sky’s tinted with orange and red ;
 ‘ When the soft spreading landscape soothes the grief in my breast,
 ‘ I think I can only be happy when dead.

‘ And when at last all is hush’d, save the homeward-bound rook,
 ‘ And the sweet nightingales perch’d high in yon tree,
 ‘ Then I watch the dew drops fall from each leaf to the brook,
 ‘ And think the dark willows weep only for me.

‘ Oh, ’tis then I sit down and ever cease to repine,
 ‘ And offer a pray’r on my oft-bended knee ;
 ‘ Then I most earnestly pray, when in death I recline,
 ‘ That my grave may be ’neath the shade of this tree.”

This is the song—and all delighted seem,
 Both with the words, the music, and the theme ;
 Give forth their thanks, with penny pieces too ;
 So none’s more pleased than the fiddling crew.

The witty dame to pleasure turns her back ;
 The sailor still cries, “ copper for poor jack ; ”
 But when their pockets have been nicely plumed,
 Their former occupations are resum’d.

So now we'll leave them and their wicked ways,
And shun their music and their squalling lays ;
Seek out the juggler, and admire his tricks,
And pay our reck'ning with a dozen kicks.



THE JUGGLER.

There stands a door, whose creaking notes atone
For doing duty as a juggler's throne,
On barrels rear'd, his wonders to display,
To make the silly simpletons his prey.

The wonder-stricken audience press around,
Contesting with each one each foot of ground ;
And they, poor folks, in simple dress attir'd,
Their penny give, and in returns admir'd.

While they applaud each wondrous trick aloud,
He criticises each one in the crowd ;
Their varied features and their actions scan,
And suits his language to each wond'ring man.

Then, first and foremost, stands the little rogue,
 Who vies with Paddy's ragged barking dog
 In keeping back the front usurping row,
 Then pays them in return with well learnt bow.

There stands the parson, smiling as the rest ;
 And there tir'd Tommy, with unbutton'd vest ;
 And there a rosy healthy little maid,
 In all the glories of new dress array'd.

The hearty miller with his loud guffaw ;
 The lusty yeoman, with his bass Ha-ha !
 The youthful mother, with her quiet smile ;
 Her laughing young ones, innocent of guile.

The dominie of truant boy in quest,
 In height well favour'd overlooks the rest.
 Squire, daughters, wife, whose wealth procures a place,
 To awe the crowd with finery and lace.

Look at the pedlar : from his pack he's run,
To see that wondrous trick that's just begun.
That poor decrepit, who has totter'd here
To taste the pleasures of a country fair.

In yonder corner glance, and there you'll see
A chiding mother and her children three ;
The little babe, who in her bag espies
The coming dinner in the purchased pies.

The older boy, who mother's pockets feel,
To pay the penny for the step or reel ;
While miss, whose manners have been learnt at school,
Vows 'tis a bore,—the worthy man a fool.

Back in the crowd a bashful youth there stands,
Who plucks up courage, and then claps his hands ;
By sweetheart chidden with reproofing glance,
Slinks through the crowd, to mingle in the dance.

And when at last the juggler steps on ground,
And with his tatter'd wide-awake goes round,
Each gives his trifle with approving nod,
And thinks the man a very demi-god.



THE DANCE.

Now in the barn,—an animated scene,—
Both rival beauties and coquettes are seen ;
Where fairy ankles and a winning glance
Secure a partner in the mazy dance.

On high are hung the garland and the wreath ;
The walls are deck'd with evergreen and heath ;
The sand lies scatter'd on the earthen floor,
And fiddlers perch'd convenient to the door.

'Midst mirth and laughter the enwhiling air
Is lightly footed by each happy pair ;
No waltz they woo, their figures to enhance,
But seek their pleasure in a country dance.

See that proud beauty, of her new dress vain,
Exert each blandishment to win a swain ;
But, like all flirts who've built upon their charms,
Now shunn'd, would anchor in a cast-off's arms.

But, doubly glad, he scorns her in return, —
Reads her a lesson that she ought to learn ;
And forces her, though beauty in herself,
To join the maids that dangle on the shelf.

The chatt'ring grandames with their gossips meet,
To watch the dancers with their nimble feet ;
To tell each other, with a half-drawn sigh,
Their feats of dancing in the days gone by.

In eager haste the dancing to begin,
The youthful couples laughingly trip in ;
And many a gallant, with a manly throb,
Bestows the penny from his Sunday fob.

'Tis good to see them, as they pass the door,
 Leave each his nail'd impressions on the floor ;
 To see each rosy and impetuous miss,
 At proper seasons, stamp an emphasis.

Now watch that honest, worthy, smock-frock'd youth,
 Who particularly attends on Ruth ;
 Who laughs so hearty, and who smiles so glad,
 That Ruth pronounces him a handsome lad.

But that we'll question. Yet I think you'll say,
 That at ' Sir Roger ' he is quite *au-fait*.
 Certain it is, that as he takes the lead,
 What's lost in custom is made up in speed.

And now the waiter, with his wily arts,
 Brings mugs of ale to elevate their hearts ;
 So they drink healths, and duly make replies,
 Praising the beauty of their partners' eyes.

Now vies the noise with that of Babel's tow'r,
The sun shines brightly with meridian pow'r ;
And pleasures, wafted from the heav'ns above,
Are scatter'd freely o'er this scene of love.

Outside the barn a moment will we stay,
To see the tipplers with the ninepins play ;
Their looks betoken that they've not a care
Beyond enjoyment at their yearly fair.

Just watch the rogues that round the bowler stand,
Who thinks himself the finest in the land ;
Tells tale on tale, of many bets he's won,
And grasps the ball, to show them how t'was done.

There lies a bacchanal, whose noonday nap
Smacks of the parlour or the plebian tap ;
Who hugs the bottle like a selfish beast,
And snores like fifty troopers at a feast.

Grand sport it is for youngsters, who delight
In mimicing, to challenge him to fight ;
Fine pleasure 'tis, by questioning to try,
To gather reason from the fool's reply.

What sweet conceits the little ones acquire,
With sense that shames the crotchets of their sire ;
But then, their young imaginations peer
Beneath the surface in an ideal sphere.

Now there's those little ones ensconced there,
Who blow soap bubbles to the empty air ;
Who kiss their fingers as they higher rise,
And think 'tis possible they'll reach the skies.

Most anxious are they, as they near the sky,
To bear their kisses to their friends on high ;
While, gently whisp'ring in each others ear,
They mention those they lov'd and cherish'd here.

With steady looks their little caps they seize,
And waft their baubles as they fan the breeze ;
Then pause, for, glitt'ring with the fairest hue,
They burst, and vanish,—with their kisses too.

The little ones that teach the babe to walk,
In kindred prattle and soft accents talk ;
While beck'ning mother, with endearing smile,
Points to the father on the rustic stile.

Let man, more manly, search in higher courts,
And shun these innocent and childish sports ;
Then will he witness as a consequence,
Philosophising with not half the sense.



THE GIPSY.

Beneath the branches of a spreading elm,
The gipsy sits,—the queen of sylvan realm ;
The lasses court her, pay her just demands,
And wait their fortunes with their open hands.

They'll marry lords, she tells them at a glance,
So they soon shun their partners in the dance ;
Makes them regret e'er speaking to the seer,—
Leaves them unhappy for another year.

If still in hopes most gladly would they stay,
If not downcast they slyly slink away ;
Dejected, sad, a weight upon their mind,
On hearing men are faithless as the wind.

THE RECRUITS.

Now see that board, with oracles around,
That stupid drunkard, grov'ling on the ground ;
That youth, who tries the pretty maid to kiss,
And gives the cue to soldier and prim miss.

Up in the long room—for the purpose let,
The village farmers and their friends are met ;
To smoke, to chatter, and, with home-brew'd beer,
To celebrate the festival with cheer.

At yonder end a window have they fac'd
By drunken fiddlers on the table plac'd ;
One often us'd by tipplers in their larks,
As witness devils in the deep cut marks.

There's the stout miller, with contented smile,
 Who sits o'ershadow'd by the old sun dial,
 Watching the swallows that affrighted fly
 From now increasing noise and revelry.

And there's the sergeant, who, with pockets lin'd,
 Tells wondrous tales as idle as the wind ;
 Who, with crack'd drummer, and as crack'd a fife,
 Would prove by music 'tis a happy life.

Repeating oft his tales of love and war
 Of battles won, he tells them by the score ;
 Backing each combat with a brimming glass,
 Hodge dubs the ribbons, and forsakes his lass.

That list'ning, op'd-mouth youth, with eager eyes,
 His hot blood mounts, his patriot's spirits rise,
 Throws up his cap, and then declares he's willing ;
 " Long live the king," he cries, and takes the shilling.

One leans o'er table with consid'ring look,
And cons the matter, ere the shilling's took :
Thinks of his marriage at no distant day,
Makes up his mind with friends and home to stay.

But, looking up, surprised he is to find
The gaudy ribbons flutt'ring in the wind ;
So, plucking courage at his comrades' shout,
He seals his bargain with a drinking bout.

Thus his poor sweetheart, selfishly forsook,
Reveals her feelings in a tearful look ;
Tells him if for the army he'll decide,
She'll ne'er consent to be a soldier's bride.

Thus these poor rustics, when the morning's come,
Will have to leave their sweethearts and their home,
To march in silence, with a sad regret,
The fated fair-day never to forget.

THE FIGHT.

Now, later in the day, men's passions rise,
The air is fill'd with argumenting cries ;
Each politician sticks out that he's right,
And settles propositions with a fight.

In rude defiance of all civil laws,
With courage worthy of a better cause ;
With eyes and actions that bespeak their hate,
They strip, their vengeful enmity to sate ;

Duly excited by each pothouse friend,
Who in the squabble best assistance lend ;
Nor will they let them fight it out alone,
For in the end they treat it as their own.

.

The crowd now bet which shall the victor be :
 Each combatant is sure of victory ;
 So, quickly scratch'd by seconds giving cue,
 They imitate the charge of Waterloo.

This round is ended, ere it has begun,
 And fearful damage has the battle done :
 Their frightful yells betoken serious hurt :—
One's trod on t'other's toe, and tore his shirt !

Upon the scene an Angel sweet has come ;
 'Tis peace and plenty blended both in one :
Peace 'twixt combatants under henpeck law,
 With *plenty*, gratis, of ne'er ending jaw.

Now wags her tongue as, coming on the spot,
 She calls each bystander a drunken sot ;
 Reads them a lecture in no measur'd terms ;
 Gives them all titles, save poor earthly worms.

She like a love her husband doth engage,
Helps like a Christian to increase her rage ;
While he, o'erpower'd, homeward goes to bed,
His wife lamenting she was ever wed.

Now watch the other, obstinate as mule,
Whose temper's been train'd in a stubborn school ;
On whom persuasion is applied in vain,
While threats and force run counter to his grain.

Just see how great his beadleship would be,
Whose cock'd hat decks him with authority ;
Who acts the tyrant with a goodly will,
And in the culprit terror would instil.

In life we see, such as in these scenes,
What some would compass, if they had the means.
Just give them riches,—raise them from their level,—
And, beggars like, they'll ride unto the devil.

This hypothesis, though strange, is true,
 That men who poverty and hardships knew,
 Now with possessions, trample on their class,
 Use pow'r and riches like a very ass.

And such a rogue—accommodating friend,
 (From all such sinners heaven me defend !)
 Forsakes his pot—while all expectant wait,
 And comes puff'd up,—the greatest of the great.

Just watch the tall man, who explains the cause ;
 And that one by him, who expounds the laws :
 One wants to know,—and one desires to tell,—
 But all unite to keep him from the cell.

Look at the motions of the little great,
 Who, as a beadle, can revenge their hate ;
 Who, when plain barber, with regrets will suit ye,
 And ask your pardon for his zeal for duty.

'Midst groans and hisses, he commences by
A dissertation on law's majesty ;
But finds his presence nothing can avail ;
Grows wild, and vows he'll lodge the rogue in jail.

Now watch the sot for whom the speech is meant,
Who to his mimic pow'rs gives playful vent ;
Who acts the beadle to the very air,
And strains the risibles of half the fair.

No more of danger does the beadle think,
But gives the crowd a bacchanalian wink ;
Takes off his hat, and wiping off the sweat,
Forthwith proceeds to carry out his threat ;

Then gives his baton to his loving wife,
Whose tongue has smooth'd the current of his life ;
Who rates him soundly as a woman can,
And bids him act the beadle like a man.

Thus, as 'tis sanction'd by his better half,
He screws his courage, like a tender calf;
While t'other sees him, and, with drunken strength,
Marks on the sward the worthy beadle's length;

Then looks on him triumphant for awhile,
While o'er his honest face there spreads a smile;
Laughs while he sees the beadle writhe with pain,
And to the pothouse dances back again.



THE COBBLER.

And now we'll go and mingle with mob,
To view the antics of the village snob,
Whose best attraction is an ogling glance,
That wins and charms us in the cobbler's dance.

The model Crispin:—first a face as black,
The charming colour of a chimney's back;
A handsome nose, to match two coal black eyes;
A mouth expressly made for telling lies.

A pair of boots—with understandings rare,—
A batter'd hat, stuck on his curly hair;
A shockless beard, that never saw a comb;
A well-wash'd collar—always left at home.

A pair of hands that never paid the tax,
 So can't use soap, to rob them of the wax ;
 His jacket's elbows polish'd with the grease,
 His war-worn trousers, suing for a piece.

A pair of arms, that oft, when yelpers bark,
 Hurl the broad lapstone, for a passing lark ;
 Whose noble owner, in tempestuous weather,
 Tans his sweet helpmate with the stirrup-leather.

A pair of legs, that widen as they go ;
 With harrowing calves that border on the bow ;
 His knees well hollow'd (Oh, detested crime !)
 By thwacking soles to a confounded chime.

A pair of feet, as broad as they can be ;
 The toes confin'd, the heels at liberty ;
 With corns unnumber'd ; and, by way of treat,
 A pair of bunions, just to keep them sweet.

And so this worthy wielder of the awl
Affords a fund of merriment to all ;
Each graceful attitude and posture shows
To great advantage his emblossom'd nose.

And, till he's dizzy, and his eyesight dim,
He to the full indulges in his whim ;
When, 'midst the laughter echoing around,
The drunken fool comes tumbling to the ground.



THE LANDLORD.

Look up above, and in that window see
The merry sharers in the revelry :
That stout old man, the gayest of the gay,
Whose reigning passion is a donkey's bray.

One hails another jumping in a sack ;
One empts a flagon down an idler's back.
One steals a handkerchief, his face to wipe,
And wrestles with his darling for his pipe.

That one who does the fragrant weed inhale,
And leaves off only for a glass of ale ;
Who puffs and smokes, and drinks and smokes again,
Is teas'd by prattling little ones in vain.

Back in the room dame fortune they entice,
 And play at cards, shove-halfpenny, and dice ;
 Both win and lose in reasonable bounds,
 And play for halfpence where some stake their pounds.

Simples they are--think gambling is no crime,
 No waste of money, nor yet loss of time ;
 But for the pleasure of excitement play,
 To pass an half-hour merrily away.

But here's the landlord with a foaming can—
 A perfect Falstaff, or an alderman ;
 Broad as he's long, a neighbour to the poor—
 One who ne'er turn'd a beggar from his door ;

Pays what he owes the minute it is due,
 Except the duties to the revenue ;
 Brings up his children with the aid of birch,
 And goes on Sundays with his wife to church.

Years, years ago, when honest men were rare,
 To cheat the customs was his only care ;
 His highest aim, his contraband to run,
 While fierce encounters he esteem'd as fun.

By many risks, a handsome sum he'd rak'd,
 And on one venture all his hoard he stak'd ;
 Sail'd with a fair wind in the Saucy Nance,
 And with a stout heart steer'd direct for France.

And thus, he mus'd, while standing at the helm,
 " Here am I, free as any in the realm,
 ' And yet they hunt me for such trips as these,
 ' The poor to vanquish, and the rich to please.

' Duty I'd pay, if 'twas to keep the king ;
 ' 'Tis not for that but for our governing ;
 ' And, to my mind, 'tis quite enough to do,
 ' To govern self, without a country too.

‘ ’Tis not to load the hungry starvling’s shelf,
 ‘ Nor for my fighting—that I do myself ;
 ‘ And if each Englishman would act like me,
 ‘ ’Twould prove a *finis* to their roguery.

· They, soon as e’er they’re in a public place,
 ‘ Run through our money at a rattling pace ;
 ‘ And when still higher in the world they rise,
 ‘ They lard the country with a pack of lies.

‘ For this roguery,—all the rascals do,—
 ‘ We pay them wages long before they’re due ;
 ‘ And yet these donkeys—nay, tis not denied—
 ‘ Strive hard to drive us, when *we* ought to ride.

‘ Laws makes the rogues, who in return make laws,
 ‘ To catch our earnings in some legal clause ;
 ‘ Who take and store it in some private den,
 ‘ And prate of honesty like honest men.

‘ Who talk of honour, and, in dulcet strain,
 ‘ Swear ’tis the shortest royal road to gain.
 ‘ Vile lying rascals !—yet they surely know,
 ‘ As sure as there’s a hell, to hell they’ll go.

‘ Honour in lawyers !—tell it not to me.
 ‘ Honour in them !—in sand stability.
 ‘ Honour with rogues ?—yes, put them on their level,
 ‘ So soon I’ll vouch for honour in the devil.

‘ What is the phantom ?—though I rack my breast,
 ‘ The proper feeling does not stand confest ;
 ‘ Unlike the lawyers, who, when twenty met,
 ‘ Swore all was fish that tumbled to their net.

‘ Some fools possess it in a suit of clothes,
 ‘ And think they lose it with a well-wrung nose ;
 ‘ But all acknowledge ’tis to have a name,
 ‘ Enrol’d and blazon’d on the scroll of fame.

‘ Some great man’s mind, to warlike purpose given,
 ‘ Sacks some great town, and straightway’s book’d for
 ‘ The nation pays all honour that she can, [heav’n;
 ‘ And lauds him loudly as a mighty man.

‘ Those he has kill’d barely extort a sigh :
 ‘ If one kills one, he’s doom’d to swing and die ;
 ‘ And this poor wretch, though he strategises well,
 ‘ ’S contemn’d, despis’d, and prophecied for hell.

‘ Now both these murderers (thank God, there’s few)
 ‘ Have been rewarded ere the merit’s due ;
 ‘ But he whose plaudits we’re compell’d to sing,
 ‘ Should first be kick’d, then treated with a swing.

‘ For why I’ll tell :—while t’other is content
 ‘ To kill but one with murderous intent,
 ‘ The other rascal takes a hundred lives, —
 ‘ Sons, daughters, fathers, husbands, and their wives.

‘ Then see the wretch the judges swing on high ;
 ‘ What groans and hisses echo through the skies !
 ‘ While t’other’s welcom’d with “ Great Cæsar hail ! ”
 ‘ Because his murder’s on a grander scale.

‘ This they call honour ; but at last they’ll find
 ‘ ’Tis honour suited to the devil’s mind ;
 ‘ That, though a bauble that will please them here,
 ‘ ’Twill cause them trouble in a warmer sphere.

‘ Now which is best : to kill a hundred men,
 ‘ Or to the world to give a simple ten ?
 ‘ If ’tis the last, our praises there should be
 ‘ To those who rear an honest family.

‘ To titles high the would-be great aspire,
 ‘ And serve as targets for the critic’s fire ;
 ‘ But these vain baubles have no charms for me :
 ‘ I deem it honour,—honoured to be.”

Thus brooding o'er imaginary wrong,
He vents his humour in a smuggling song
With busy thoughts, unchanging as the wind,
Till France is near'd, to chase them from the mind.

Then favour'd by the darkness of the night,
His boat he anchors ere the morning's light;
When busy rogues that prowl around the place
Bring down rare hollands and still rarer lace.

And ere the sunbeams all-revealing rise,
To speed a golden passage through the skies,
Our worthy smuggler, ere it lights the main,
To cliff-bound loving England turns again.

Ere he goes, he backward turns his glance,
And bids adieu to the fair coast of France ;
For nothing cares, speeds o'er the sparkling sea,
Shares the wild breezes and their liberty.

And once again he guides, with steady hand,
 The bounding vessel to the distant land ;
 Beguiles the moments, as he sails along,
 By singing snatches of a smuggling song.

THE SONG.

“ Oh, right jolly smugglers are we ;
 ‘ No victims to frivolous care ;
 ‘ In the face of troubles we flee,
 ‘ And dangers unnumber’d we dare.

 ‘ And when the night comes with the tide,
 ‘ And our bounding bark speeds o’er the sea,
 ‘ No trouble have we then beside,
 ‘ For right jolly smugglers are we.

 ‘ Oh, right jolly smugglers are we,
 ‘ As, bravely our boat breasts the foam ;
 ‘ Nought but pleasure assails on our lee,
 ‘ The ocean’s our birth-place and home.

‘ And when the fierce winds drive the clouds,
 ‘ And the night is as dark as can be ;
 ‘ When the lightning plays ’midst the shroud,
 ‘ Then right jolly smugglers are we. ”

Again his truant fancy seeks to find
 Another subject for his roving mind ;
 So tries the French,—an oft-repeated case,—
 Our foes alone in fashion and in lace.

THE SONG.

“ The war, alas ! is all the cry ;
 ‘ ’Tis that which makes our widows sigh.
 ‘ ’Tis the Frenchman’s vain ambition
 ‘ That will learn him true contrition ;
 ‘ And when his eagles have no pow’r,
 ‘ ’Tis then the grapes they will look sour.

‘ ‘ Forget, forgive !’ our parsons cry ;
 ‘ Forgive we can’t, but can defy ;
 ‘ For justice stimulates our men :
 ‘ Their evils can’t be cur’d by pen ;
 ‘ And when Napoleon’s in our pow’r,
 ‘ He’ll find the grapes confounded sour.

' May this for ever be our cry :
 ' ' God save King George's Majesty ; '
 ' May the false rogue be caught at last,
 ' And in base shackles be bound fast ;
 ' Then left to wonder, in the tow'r,
 ' How 'tis the grapes have turn'd so sour.

Thus, having eas'd the burden of his breast,
 His faithful bloodhound shares his passing jest ;
 While, like an eagle, emblem of the free,
 He eyes the surface of the boundless sea.

And now the darkness of night's shadows break,
 And leaves the sea as tranquil as a lake ;
 While nature's miracle, the glorious sun,
 Emerges from the distant horizon.

Now see our smuggler (under law's stern ban)
 Survey the ocean like a practis'd man ;
 And reconnoit'ring, like an anxious slave,
 Descries a vessel on the distant wave ;

Then strains his eyes, and sees a tiny sail
Swell proud and nobly to the fresh'ning gale ;
Prepares at once for either foe or friend,
Resolv'd with life the vessel to defend.

But soon he's eased of the anxious doubt,
That 'tis a revenue preventive scout,
But puts his wond'ring mind upon the rack,
For 'tis his lassie, in his fishing smack.

Most gallantly the briny waves she breasts,
And proudly rises on the billows' crests ;
Swells out her canvas to the fav'ring wind,
And leaves dear England but a speck behind.

And now the smuggler, with a cheering shout,
Retrims the sail, and puts the helm about ;
Expectant stands, as gradually she nears,
A prey to troubles and foreboding fears.

Now, as he nears the little vessel's side,
He hails the boat, and clasps his promis'd bride;
For, though his calling and his laws are wild,
He loves and worships the innkeeper's child.

He gently clasps her to his bosom warm,
And circles her with his protecting arm;
Admiring, thinks what heroism she's shown
For him, thus leaving her parental home.

With softest words he bids her to begin;
Asks how all fared when she left the inn;
Again requests her shortly to recite
The cause and reason of her midnight flight.

With blushing looks, her pretty lips explain
How that some strangers to the village came;
Suspicious seem'd;—she fathom'd their disguise,
And soon discover'd they were rev'nue spies.

'Thus modestly she tells her loving tale,
How, that while serving round her father's ale,
From o'erheard chat their purpose she could learn,
That they would seize him on the boat's return.

He heard no more—no time was there to lose.
One moment staid, to kiss her for the news ;
Then wisely thought, although they knew the fact,
They, to arrest, must take him in the act ;

Then loos'd the sails and scudded miles away,
And sold the cargo ere another day ;
Then went on shore, took Nancy for his wife,
And, led by her, commenc'd a steady life.

When he came back, the coastguards, with surprise,
Saw him return without their reckon'd prize ;
And, buoy'd with hopes while lurking on the scent,
Disgrac'd, crestfallen, and despis'd, they went.

Nan's mother lik'd him for his daring deeds :
 He duty free supplied the old man's needs ;—
 Still tells each guest the oft-repeated tale,—
 His wife's devotion, and her midnight sail.

The old folks liv'd as happy as could be,
 Blest with good children and prosperity ;
 Thankful to God for all his mercies giv'n,—
 Liv'd Christian lives, and forward look'd for heav'n.

As age grew on, with its infirmity,
 They saw their children's little progeny.
 Patient they liv'd, and like good Christians died,
 And gave this inn to the smuggler and his bride,

Though years have pass'd, his creed is still the same :
 Still cheats the king, and thinks he's not to blame ;
 Still cares for no one, — deals with liberal hand—
 Acts honest, and's respected through the land.

Nance, matron-like, has matrimonial fits,
Calls women's tongues their lawful perquisites ;—
As master acts,—yet happily they dwell,
And reign together at the festival.

And now the landlord to the windows goes,
And from a shovel well-fried halfpence throws ;
Thus curries favour with the merry boys,
Who thanks return with one continuous noise.



THE IRISHMAN.

That wild Irishman on the table see,
Who capers cuts to whistled melody ;
Waves his old hat, without a brim or crown,
Twists his shillelagh and the table down.

The various ones that round the table stand
Step forth at once, and volunteer a hand ;
Soon drag him forth, —no better for the fall,—
To prove a curious laughing-stock for all.



THE RANTERS.

A little farther, on that rising knoll,
Some ranters, gratis, give good news to all ;
Bid them beware and hasten from the revel,
Or else at last 'twill take them to the devil.

In reverential attitudes they stand,
Eyes bent to heaven, like a quakers' band ;
While one old sinner calls them all to pray'r,
To beg of heaven to convert the fair.

Some sons of Belial, that stand awhile,
With hell are threaten'd, if they dare but smile ;
And there's no doubt well roasted they would be,
If theirs were heaven-directed prophecy.

Old cronies some, as gospel take it in,
And think it is the deadliest form of sin ;
And while they're praying they may be forgiv'n,
We'll leave them trotting on the road to heav'n.



THE BOOTH.

Now what's the use of courting when you're wed ?
In ord'ring coffins, ere the patient's dead ?
In gaily laughing, when you ought to soothe ?
And what's a festival, without a booth ?

And here stands one that glories in its paint,
With well-daub'd pictures of its patron saint ;
St. George of England, in a precious mess,—
The dragon writhing in a fancy dress ;

Whose outside actors give the world to know,
'Tis not a patch upon the inside show ;
Whose oratorical organs never cease
Enlarging on the merits of each piece.

Now there's the clown, whose presence we endure;
 Because in actions he's a perfect cure :
 An extra fool, as podgy as a pope,—
 A ballet girl to dance upon the rope.

An harlequin, array'd in spangles fine ;
 The head tragedian, and a columbine ;
 The white-wash'd scamp, whose duty 'tis to sing ;
 And, chief of all, the master of the ring.

And now the clown, accustom'd to the track,
 Commences shaving with the razor's back ;
 While worthy pantaloon, his quondam father,
 Laments the wasting of a dose of lather.

Amidst the noise, the fool commits the crime
 Of making dogg'rel and impromptu rhyme ;
 In verse satirical, bleeds like a leech,
 And learns them manners in a passing speech.

Now, having gather'd all his thespian fire,
 And gain'd permission from the flatter'd squire,
 He bows most humbly with preamb'l'd fuss,
 With studied attitude, proceeding thus :—

‘ Come, fav’ring muse, my willing mind engage,
 ‘ While I depict the manners of the age ;
 ‘ And paint in verse the fashions that there be—
 ‘ The rich man’s whims—the poor’s simplicity ;
 ‘ To show the reasons, and the cause combin’d,
 ‘ That point the moral of the rustic’s mind ;
 ‘ Nor fail to ask which, worthier shall be,
 ‘ The nat’ral impulse, or formality ?
 ‘ Now which is best : the ceremonious bow,
 ‘ That almost bids the poor intruder go ;
 ‘ Or the kind welcome and the hearty squeeze,
 ‘ That puts the stranger at his homely ease ?
 ‘ The last is first — nor does he look for pelf,
 ‘ But helps his neighbour and enjoys himself.
 ‘ Visit the rich—they think themselves above,
 ‘ And freeze their welcome as they cool in love ;
 ‘ And e’er the dogs run barking as you go,
 ‘ To add annoyance to the insult too.

‘ But seek the poor—still poorer you may be :
 ‘ They’ll still extend their hospitality ;
 ‘ Grasp firm you hand, and, with a kindly smile,
 ‘ Press you to share their company awhile ;
 ‘ When little children imitate their sire,
 ‘ And press you gently to the blazing fire ;
 ‘ Then, ere upon the old arm chair you’ve sat,
 ‘ With childish glee they hide your tatter’d hat.
 ‘ The aged grandsire gives his welcome too,
 ‘ And taps the barrel of October brew.
 ‘ Now, you may ask why this same theme I choose ;
 ‘ And now I’ll tell—the worthy squire to lose ;
 ‘ For had he enter’d in the humble tent,
 ‘ You’d feel asham’d to give your laughter vent.
 ‘ I never like to see a mincing calf,
 ‘ But honest ploughboys give a hearty laugh.
 ‘ And so concluding, go throughout the fair,
 ‘ To find a finer horse than Bet, the mare.
 ‘ You’ll see the tricks she play’d at foreign courts ;
 ‘ Though, when they saw her, she was out of sorts ;
 ‘ Although they promis’d—a most common path—
 ‘ When she was dead, to souse her in the Bath ;
 ‘ Or else, by dint of adding to the charter,
 ‘ To make a mare a mistress of the garter.

‘ She’ll tell you true the colour of your hair,
 ‘ And if your sweetheart’s present at the fair ;
 ‘ Tell you your fortune and your future lot—
 ‘ How many children you’ve already got ;
 ‘ Tell you how many youngster’s there’s to be :—
 ‘ In short, she’ll tell you’ll what you’ve never see.
 ‘ Tell all your neighbours if you’re church’d and wed ;
 ‘ When you’ll be single, and your husband dead.
 ‘ She’ll tell you also—pothar seize the din—
 ‘ One penny is the charge,—so come, step in.
 ‘ Now then, my lads. hand up the ladies there :
 ‘ Are you not partners in an outside share ?
 ‘ Now then, be quick—and you, my hearties bold,
 ‘ Don’t mix the coppers with the notes and gold.
 ‘ And you, my youths, consider ere you’re rash,
 ‘ Or you’ll be ruin’d if you spend your cash ;
 ‘ While all those scamps who think that I’m a cheat
 ‘ Play up a tune, and let ’em have a treat.
 ‘ Good bye, my darlings ! Oh, ’tis fine and rare,
 ‘ And can’t be equall’d in the blessed fair.
 ‘ Once more I’ll tell you ’tis no crime or sin :
 ‘ Step up, step up—we’re going to begin.”

Such is the booth, and such the choice prologue ;
And such the tactics of the cunning rogue,
Who pleases all in rabble and in rout,
While pleasure reigns within, and noise without.



THE WAITER.

O sunny Afric ! highly-favoured clime,
Where grow the olive and the grateful lime.
Land of swift torrents and impetuous floods ;
Of mighty tracts--impenetrable woods !

Of arid plains, where hurricanes and storms
Sweep o'er the desert in a thousand forms ;
Where e'en the sunbeams, shining on the ground,
Hurl desolation and destruction round.

What though the simoom o'er the desert drifts,
Still there Dame Nature spreads her choicest gifts,
In green oasis plac'd by heav'n's will—
A double good for ev'ry seeming ill.

Land of Rome's victors, and of Moorish boast !
 Of scented woodlands and perfumed coast.
 Land of spic'd hills, whose bases kiss the waves ;
 Yes, land of selfish tyranny—and slaves !

O God of mercy ! bend thy pitying ear :
 Extend to them thy all-protecting care !
 Send down thy power and thy mighty grace
 On those—the black and persecuted race !

Shame on the country that permits the deed !
 Who smooth their conscience to supply their need ;
 Be curses theirs, whoever they may be,
 Who tolerate the fruits of slavery !

All such vile rogues, who freedom make a jest,
 All honest men undoubtedly detest :
 Man ne'er was made to tremble at a nod,
 The self-same creatures of the same great God.

Now here's a negro, who, devoid of sense,
 Enacts the waiter for a few odd pence ;
 Who gives full vent to ev'rything he thinks,
 And with each bumpkin condescends and drinks ;

Serves with each draught some gossiping *on dit*,
 And has betimes a goodly share of wit ;
 Tells wondrous tales of either land or sea,
 So acts to inn folks with impunity.

So many calls upon the ale to-day
 Leave him no time his foolery to play ;
 Still he finds time to titilate his throat
 With beer enough a battle ship to float.

So much he's had, it's addled his poor head :
 He'd fain retire, and rest awhile in bed ;
 But no : the boys, not pitying his hump,
 Considerately take him to the pump ;

Vow that they will his drunkenness requite,
Declare they'll wash him till they get him white ;
Find 'tis a hard task, so behave less civil :
Swear 'tis, and act as if it were, the devil.



THE LOVERS.

The youthful sweetheart from the throng is led,
And's press'd to say when she'll consent to wed ;
But he's soon told blind weasels are not caught,
So she the subject gives a moment's thought.

Then squares her mind, and scornfully says ' No ;'
Thinks it presumption, so she bids him go ;
But still, consoling for his loss of bliss,
Bids him be quick and snatch a parting kiss.

Now watch the twinkle in the lover's eyes,
Who twirls his hat and heaves a dozen sighs ;
Then, like a hero, clasps her to his arms,
And with a kiss her agitation calms.

Now, while she's resting on her lover's breast,
He once more puts the question to the test :
And slyly asking if she loves another,
Is answer'd ' No,' and then's referr'd to mother.

And now the matter's settled to their mind,
They hear a laugh, and are surpris'd to find
Some grinning boys, who jestingly declare
They'll tell the village of the whole affair.

Now, as the fair is drawing to a close,
Friends chat with friends, foes fraternize with foes ;
Old women gossip o'er a pinch of snuff,
And men, half-drunk, talk political stuff.

Then, as a fit conclusion to the scene,
The youths and maidens gather in a ring,
To kiss and fondle to their hearts' content,
And then to glory in their ' devilment.'

Now night 'gain comes, to give the moon new birth,
And throws its sable mantle o'er the earth ;
And twinkling stars, for mortals weak and frail,
Like brilliant meteors, pierce the darken'd veil.

The thirsty cattle hasten to the brook ;
The owls their nests already have forsook ;
The cunning fox peeps slyly from the glen,
To snatch a supper from the sleepy hen.

The cooing pigeons seek the leafy wood ;
The hungry wolf comes prowling for his food ;
The startled rabbits and the sleepy hare
In quiet burrow, in their grassy lair.

The little songsters seek their shelter'd nest ;
The cawing rook flies homeward to his nest ;
The aged shepherd folds his weary sheep,
And hastens home to prayer and to sleep.

The busy matron puts her knitting by,
And wipes the tear that glistens in her eye ;
Then lays the Bible on her partner's lap,
And gently wakes him from his ev'ning nap.

The good man, lowly, and in language terse,
Explains the chapter and expounds the verse ;
Thus reverently close the happy day,
And bless their children who are far away.

At last the rev'lers leave the noisy fair,
And with their fairings to their homes repair ;
While the last loud notes of the village bell
Ring out the " Good night " of the festival.

FINIS.





